

I. INTRODUCTION

The Field Office carries out (1) the original inspection and weighing of grain under the U.S. Grain Standards Act of 1976, (2) the permissive inspection, weighing, and check loading of rice, pulses, processed grain products and other assigned commodities under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, and (3) the supervision of these activities conducted by licensed inspectors and weighers.

The incumbent makes final grade determinations on products standardized under the Acts and may perform weighing activities at grain handling facilities.

II. MAJOR DUTIES

Determines the grade of grain and related commodities and makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs agency services in support of grain, rice, and related commodity markets. These include (a) the original inspection and weighing of grain; (b) the permissive inspection, weighing and check loading of rice, pulses, processed grain products, and other assigned commodities; and/or (c) the technical supervision (oversight, reporting, and review) of grain and commodity inspection and weighing activities performed by licensed or contracted non-Federal inspectors.

Work assignments are rotated between shift and points of inspection within the area serviced by the field office. Also, assignments may be performed in other field offices which involve details and/or reassignment to a different geographical area involving commodities or market services differing from the original field office. In these cases the incumbent may be required to be proficient in grading additional grains, be familiar with various types of weighing equipment, and perform the full range of weighing activities. In addition, the incumbent may receive rotational assignments involving safety, equipment, training or other related functions of the field office. The incumbent may also be responsible for general upkeep of work areas.

The incumbent is responsible for his/her own transportation to and from assigned points of inspection and may be required to operate a motor vehicle on official business.

The work involves one or more of the following inspection functions and/or weighing activities:

A. Federal Export Inspection

Performs original inspections and determines the grade of products standardized under the Acts or makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs monitoring inspections and appeals of initial grade determinations. Duties typically include:

1. Grading: Performs mechanical measurement and visual inspections to establish the type and quality of grain and related commodities. The physical analysis includes determining grading factors such as: kind, class, subclass, damage, heat damage, foreign material, smut, insect

infestation, odor, moisture, protein content, condition, milling degree, color, and other grading factors. The incumbent applies the official standard to determine and certify the grade of the product. The ACG explains and interprets grading procedures, methods, and factors to producers and members of the trade in order to assure compliance with the provisions of the Acts and official standards and regulations of the Department. Instructs, evaluates, and monitors trainees, junior graders or technicians/aides on the techniques of grading, mechanical determinations, sampling and product characteristics. Graders may be required to perform sampling duties.

In order to properly grade grain, may be required to conduct various and complex chemical and physical tests on samples these tests include aflatoxin, NIR protein, falling numbers, mini column thin layer chromatography, bleach tests, and nuclear magnetic resonance tests. Utilizes statistical loading plans to determine uniformity, interprets deviations in test results and takes necessary action.

2. Stowage Examinations: Conducts stowage examinations on shipholds, barges, hopper cars, and other containers to insure cleanliness and acceptability of storage and handling facilities.

3. Fumigation: Witnesses fumigations of shipholds to insure fumigants are applied according to Agency approved instructions.

B. State Delegation and Interior Inspection

Determines the grade on grain and related commodities and makes independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations. Performs inspections to monitor the accuracy of licensed, non-Federal inspectors and to resolve disputes of initial grade determinations. Reviews grading procedures and methods used by licensees and supervises grades being assigned by licensed inspectors to samples of wheat, beans, peas, corn, oats, rice, rye, barley, lentils, soybeans, hay, sorghum, and related commodities. In connection with grading, performs physical analysis of sample portions for grading factors, such as: kind, class, subclass, damaged, heat damage, foreign material, smut, insect infestation, odor, protein content, moisture, condition, milling degree, color, and other grading factors. Instructs licensed inspectors, technicians, and samplers in grading, sampling and laboratory techniques and corrects improper methods. Explains and interprets grading procedures, methods, and factors to licensed inspectors and members of the trade to maintain compliance with official standards and regulations. Conducts licensing examinations for non-Federal inspectors, technicians, and samplers. Conducts stowage examinations to insure cleanliness and adequacy of storage and handling facilities. May be required to perform sampling duties.

C. Inspection (Processed Products).

The incumbent samples, checkweighs, and checkloads processed products such as flour, cake mix, corn meal, vegetable oils, and other processed products inspected under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946. Samples and inspects nonfood components (containers, strapping, pallets, etc.) for these products to insure that they meet specifications; interprets and utilizes the various Federal, Military and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) specifications; employs sampling tables and selection rates; conducts required tests, such as organoleptic tests, and performs plant sanitation, and carrier and shiphold examinations.

Trains new ACG's and ACA'S, arranges for and recommends licensing of contract samplers; discusses proper procedures with licensees; technically monitors, controls, and reviews contract samplers and state inspection personnel; arranges for contract sampling services and provides contract compliance reviews to include making corrective actions to assure adherence to standard procedures; and makes personal contacts with members of the trade, state inspection agencies, processors, etc. to discuss problems, inspection services, and regulations.

D. Equipment Checktesting

As assigned, inspects and checktests equipment and diverter samplers used for official inspection. Prepares samples for agency and/or state offices, to ensure that they are using approved equipment which is in good working order and that equipment is tested in a timely and complete manner. Investigates new sampling methods and equipment and periodically submits reports and recommendations in findings to supervisory personnel for further study.

E. Weighing

The incumbent may perform either or both of the following weighing functions: (a) Official weighing (class X), either at export or interior locations; (b) supervision of weighing (classes X or Y) by any delegated export state or designated agency.

Ensures accurate weights and accurate documentation of events that support the official weight certificates. Detects and identifies errors in the weighing system such as incorrect printouts on tapes or scale tickets of weight and identification information; failures to weigh or record total volume of grain, faulty weight results due to radio frequency interference, wind, improper venting, calibration or adjustment, power failures, poor housekeeping, damaged load receiving elements, and problems in the grain delivery systems. Verifies the accuracy of remote visual display and electronic lockouts. When remedial action is required, the incumbent deals with elevator employees and management officials and/or notifies immediate supervisor so that action may be taken to immediately correct the situation or to discontinue official weighing on the scale or piece of equipment. Observes elevator or scale technicians when certain repairs or corrections are made and performs routine tests to determine the effect of repairs. Approves and signs the official weight certificates. Under state delegation, reviews and validates the conformance of state weighing to federal standards. May instruct, evaluate and monitor trainees, junior graders or technicians/aids on weighing procedures.

F. Management/Compliance Reviews

Conducts and/or participates in management reviews of official agency operations. These include auditing records, investigating inspection results, and analyzing management and administrative practices. The purpose is to ensure that these agencies fully comply with the U.S. Grain Standards Act, regulations under the Law, and FGIS directives and procedures. In addition to preparing formal written reports of findings, discusses results with agency officials, assisting them in improving operations where necessary.

III. Factors

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position - Level 1-6 - 950 points

A thorough and detailed knowledge of the principles, methods, official grade standards, and regulations applied in grain inspections. A thorough knowledge of the characteristics and common defects of wheat, rice, other grains, or grain products being graded. Knowledge of the production, weighing, processing, storage, and transportation conditions and practices that directly affect product acceptability or grade of grain, pulses, or grain products being graded.

Thoroughly developed skill in sampling, mechanical determination, and grading grains to make independent decisions on difficult and borderline grade determinations.

Knowledge of the official grain weighing process including making independent decisions regarding normal daily weighing operations. Has total familiarity with the grain flow systems and elevator grain movement capabilities at each grain elevator assigned.

Knowledge of the basic operational workings of grain weighing devices and ability to detect and interpret operational malfunctions which could affect the accuracy of the weights is required at locations where weighing is performed under the Grain Standards Act.

The knowledge and skill are such that after a period of training and study, the ACG is capable of rotating from one functional area to another (e.g., from original grading and weighing to overseeing non-Federal inspectors or weighers) or capable of rotating to grade different grains or pulses (e.g., from rice grading to wheat grading).

Knowledge of chemical and physical test procedures in order to accurately and safely provide grading information.

Knowledge of administrative and management aspects of grain grading activities, in addition to technical procedures, in order to adequately conduct compliance reviews.

Knowledge of FGIS and facility safety standards and policies and their application to daily operations in order to enhance the safety of the employee, coworkers, and the public.

2. Supervisory Controls - Level 2-3 - 275 points

The supervisor coordinates grading activities and assigns work on a daily or weekly basis. Assignments are given in broad terms, indicating the location and general grading/inspection/weighing work to be performed.

The employee carries out the assignments without direct supervision, adapting work procedures to accommodate the specific situation. The employee independently applies the standards, procedures, and regulations, resolving nearly all technical problems in determining quantity and quality. Only highly controversial or precedent setting determinations are referred to the supervisor.

Inspection and weighing reports and official certificates are periodically reviewed for adherence to normal procedures and for conformity to expected results. Occasional spot checks of actual grading are used to review technical proficiency.

Factor 3. Guidelines - Level 3-3 - 275 points

The primary guides consist of the official grain standards and regulations, inspection and weighing manuals covering procedures and techniques, visual guides, and supplemental instructions, both written and oral. The incumbent applies the standards, regulations and procedures, making immediate quality and quantity determinations.

Factor 4. Complexity- Level 4-3 - 150 points

Assignments deal with a variety of grains and grain types (e.g. wheat, corn, soybeans, rice, etc.), scales and scale types (e.g., manual and electronic hopper scales, and manual and electronic platform scales, etc.) and vary according to the nature of the assignment (e.g., sampling, original grading, original weighing, technical oversight of non-Federal inspectors, weighers, etc.) The volume and speed of the loading operation (e.g., involving ocean vessels being loaded for export) requires timely and accurate grading and weighing determinations.

The employee selects appropriate methods depending on the nature of each assignment, including necessary chemical or physical testing considering the type of grain or grain product in the case of grading, or considering the configuration of the elevator or facility and type of equipment in the case of weighing, or processed products inspection.

Management compliance reviews involve the entire range of technical, administrative, and management aspects of grading activity. Various grade factors and/or contract specifications must be analyzed to make grade determinations, and a variety of processing or storage processes must be analyzed to inspect processed products or conduct or oversee weighing operations.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect - Level 5-3 - 150 points

The work involves applying the standards and regulations in determining the quantity and general condition of the U.S grade of grain and commodities. The incumbent issues weighing and inspection reports and official grade and weight certificates. Since grain is traded on the basis of U.S. grades, weights, and export contracts, the grader's work affects the financial interests of buyers, sellers, shippers, warehouses, and others having and economic interest in the product.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts - Level 6-2 - 25 points

In addition to contacts with other Agency employees, the work includes relationships with employees and supervisors of grain elevators, shippers, licensed inspection agencies, sampling contractors, and similar firms operating in the marketing chain.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts - Level 7-3 - 120 points

The purpose is to develop and maintain the cooperation of industry personnel and resolve problems and conflicts to assure compliance with program regulations. Assists the supervisor in planning and scheduling work in cooperation with industry personnel. May instruct, evaluate, and advise new or lower grade employees on job techniques and skills in connection with sampling, inspection, and weighing methods and use of equipment. Assures that lower grade employees perform sampling, inspection, and weighing functions in accordance with regulations.

Factor 8. Physical Demands - Level 8-3 - 50 points

Phases of the work may require considerable physical exertion. Obtaining samples involves climbing onto trucks, barges, hopper cars, man lifts, etc., using probes, pelicans, and similar sampling devices; and moving and lifting grain bags or sacks weighing up to 55 pounds. Ship inspections involve climbing into and out of the ship holds.

Factor 9. Work Environment - Level 9-3 - 50 points

The work involves regular and recurring work in grain elevators subject to potentially explosive concentrations of grain dust, in rice mills, processed product plants, rail yards, dock loading and unloading facilities, and various warehouses. Works at extreme heights in grain elevators and aboard ships. Must continuously take extensive safety precautions to avoid serious accidents resulting from these hazards. Some work is performed outdoors under varying weather conditions.